



# CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY **NEWS RELEASE**

---

## Department of Toxic Substances Control

---

**T - 14 - 03**

For Immediate Release  
April 22, 2003

Contact: Lisa Gray  
916.324.0936  
Ron Baker  
916.324.3142

### **Vehicle Service and Repair Program Highlighted on Earth Day Pollution Prevention Efforts Benefit Shop Owners and the Environment**

Sacramento --- "Pollution prevention efforts at auto repair shops are working. The real success of the program is the acceptance and use of pollution prevention alternatives by large corporations, small business, and individuals. Even more impressive are the profits gained and benefits provided to the environment," said Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) Director Ed Lowry.

Pollution prevention reduces or eliminates pollution at its source, before it is generated. On Earth Day, Tuesday, April 22, 2003, the DTSC will highlight AAA of Northern California and NAPA Auto Parts official adoption of the [Vehicle Service and Repair \(VSR\) Program](#) established by DTSC in 2000. The VSR program provides free training and technical assistance to auto repair shops to help them in reducing the amount of hazardous waste they generate. The program provides opportunities that can help vehicle repair shops increase sales and productivity while reducing operating expenses and providing the best available methods to minimize or prevent the generation of hazardous waste. The methods taught by the VSR program also have the important benefit of reducing employee workplace exposure to harmful chemicals.

More than 400 individual repair shops, local governments, fleets, corporations and automobile dealerships, including the AAA of Northern California, NAPA Auto Parts, Ford, Auto Service Council of California, and Honda have taken advantage of the opportunities provided by the VSR program and the Pollution Prevention Model Shop Program.

"The VSR program has created opportunities for all auto service facilities to lower operating costs, by as much as \$15,000 annually, decrease environmental liability, and reduce the amount of pollutants in storm drains," said Lowry.

The VSR program has distributed hydrophobic mops for use on oily floor cleanup instead of using disposable, kitty litter type absorbents. After the distribution, it was estimated that this

--- MORE ---

one simple change could result in 330 tons of hazardous absorbent waste not being created and disposed of in landfills. In addition, up to 4 million gallons of potentially contaminated wash waste would not be created and would be diverted from entering unprotected storm drains and waterways.

Other pollution prevention measures introduced to auto repair shops by the VSR program include:

1. Aqueous Parts Cleaning Systems: An oily dirty part is put into an aqueous spray cabinet and in fifteen minutes the part is clean with absolutely no use of solvents. Aqueous parts cleaning systems typically pay for themselves in less than two years. An average shop can reduce their solvent use by about 150 gallons per year, greatly reducing employee exposure to chemicals that pose health risks and also reducing costs associated with managing solvent waste.
2. Spill Prevention and Floor Cleanup: Simple, cost effective ways to clean up oil and other automotive spills. These methods have significantly reduced the generation of hazardous oily absorbents being dumped into landfills. An average shop can save up to 400 pounds of this waste per year.
3. Aqueous brake washers, refillable spray bottles, and bio-remediation floor cleaning systems: These practices have substantially reduced dangerous air emissions, employee workplace hazards, and polluted run-off into storm drains, creeks, rivers, and oceans.

In support of the VSR program, the DTSC recognizes auto service facilities that have adopted pollution prevention techniques and tools through its Pollution Prevention Model Shop Program. Repair shops can take advantage of the marketing potential of being an environmentally responsible green business, by being designated a pollution prevention auto repair shop and receiving a symbol to distinguish themselves as a model pollution prevention shop.

# # #

**The Department of Toxic Substances Control's mission is to restore, protect, and enhance the environment and ensure public health, environmental quality and economic vitality by regulating hazardous waste, conducting and overseeing cleanups, and developing and promoting pollution prevention.**

# # #

*"The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption. For a list of simple ways you can reduce demand and cut your energy costs, see our Web-site at [www.dtsc.ca.gov](http://www.dtsc.ca.gov)."*